

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

0 – 12 MONTHS

- ✓ Attends to sounds and voices.
- ✓ Recognises facial expressions and tones of voice.
- ✓ Baby will initiate vocalising and have different vocalisations for different emotional states. Takes turns vocalising with others.
- ✓ Babbling (e.g., mama, dada).
- ✓ Baby attempts to imitate gross motor gestures.
- ✓ First words from around 1 year often naming familiar people or objects or using words to participate in communicative games (e.g., boo, nursery rhymes)

1 – 2 YEARS

- ✓ Increasing number of single words and beginning to use 2 word combinations e.g. “mummy car”, “daddy work”. Uses 20-50 words.
- ✓ Possessive words emerging.
- ✓ Use of ‘no’ for negation.
- ✓ May refer to self with name.
- ✓ Begins to mark questions by using raising intonation.

2 – 3 YEARS

- ✓ Beginning to use me/you.
- ✓ 3 or more element utterances: e.g. ‘My teddy gone’, ‘where my mummy?’
- ✓ Vocabulary increases to 250-300 words.
- ✓ Talks to self in long monologues
- ✓ Asking lots of questions including what and where questions.
- ✓ Beginning to use word endings: e.g. plurals, progressive -ing, regular past tenses, articles (‘a’ and ‘the’) and possessive ‘s.
- ✓ Uses ‘and’ to link ideas

3 – 4 YEARS

- ✓ Increasing complexity in spoken language e.g. 4+ element sentences: ‘We went to town and we did have a haircut and then we got a burger’
- ✓ Links ideas (using when, cos, after, before): ‘I go now cos my mummy’s here’
- ✓ Using auxiliary ‘is’, pronouns (he/she), contracted negatives (isn’t, doesn’t), contracted copula (He’s) and past participle (broken)

- ✓ Uses language for a variety of purposes: role play, making requests, informing, retelling favourite stories, and for talking about things that have happened at home and in pre-school
- ✓ Describes how an object is used
- ✓ Vocabulary of up to 5000 words
- ✓ Begins to talk about past events.
- ✓ Asks what, why, when and how questions.
- ✓ Uses basic size vocabulary.

4 – 5 YEARS

- ✓ Complex sentences: e.g. 'We went to the park and I had a ride on the swing and I fell off'
- ✓ Can tell a story sticking to the topic and using 'adult-like' grammar
- ✓ Names items in a category: e.g. animals
- ✓ Still asking lots of questions including meanings of words.
- ✓ Talks about past and future events.
- ✓ Uses pronouns (his, hers, theirs), comparative -er and superlative -est, use of 'is' vs 'are', past tense 'to be', adverb 'ly' and irregular plurals.

5 - 6 YEARS

- ✓ Continuing 'explosion' in vocabulary.
- ✓ Responds to 'why?' questions by giving a reason.
- ✓ Using language effectively in a range of situations and for a range of purposes.
- ✓ Uses imaginative language in play.
- ✓ Uses adjectives to describe people and objects e.g. small, funny, nice.
- ✓ Defines words.
- ✓ Uses irregular past tense.

6 - 7 YEARS

- ✓ Some children still making errors with irregular plurals, tenses e.g., 'mouses', 'we wented', 'we goed'
- ✓ Retells a story with visual support
- ✓ Continuing growth in vocabulary – new words often learnt through reading
- ✓ Complex grammatical structures gradually established (could, would, may, might etc.)
- ✓ Uses language to think through a line of possible enquiry, plan ahead and organise thinking (higher level language, more abstract language).
- ✓ Uses language to make jokes, tease, engage in sarcasm, argue point of view, explain complex situations, talk about movies or past events in detail.
- ✓ Develops ability to write descriptive paragraphs and stories.
- ✓ Able to make predictions, justify decisions, provide solutions and give explanations.

7 - 8 YEARS

- ✓ Can express their opinion.
- ✓ Can retell imaginary and real events.
- ✓ Uses appropriate grammar in speech and written work.
- ✓ Will ask questions to clarify information.

Information gathered from: Expressive Language PowerPoint (GHC Children's Speech and Language Therapy team), Kid Sense Child Development- Stages of Language Development chart [online] and Sax and Weston (2007) Language Development Milestones [online].